

San Leandro Computer Club

JOURNAL

San Leandro Computer Club
P.O. Box 1506
San Leandro, CA 94577-0374

An independent, non-profit organization of Atari microcomputer users. Membership provides access to the club print and magnetic libraries, subscription to the Journal and participation in club activities.

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January • 1992

FEATURES

Life Of A Computer Nerd <i>Jim Hood</i>	4
Another Life, Another Nerd <i>Bob Woolley</i>	8
Our 8-Bit Disks <i>Bob Scholar</i>	9
Jolly Jim's Juvenilia <i>Jim Moran</i>	10

CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	Main Meeting 8:00 p.m. San Leandro Library	8	9	10	11
12	ST Meeting 8:00 p.m. San Leandro Library	14	ST Beginners' SIG 7:30 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	Publishing SIG 7:30 p.m.	Journal Deadline	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Call SIG Leaders to confirm meetings.

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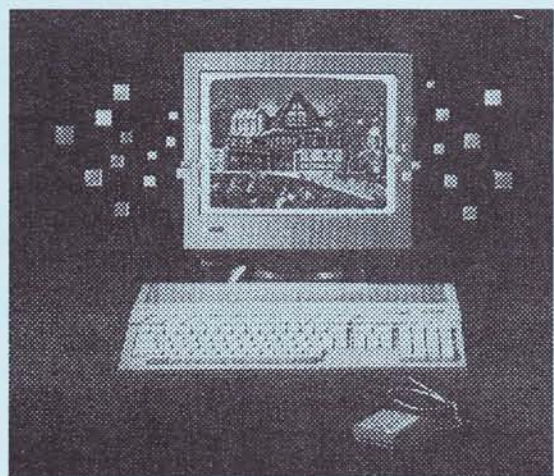
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THE LIFE OF A COMPUTER NERD, PART 1

Jim Hood

The momentous decisions of a New Year.

Do I continue with PageStream 2.1, Part 6 or do I make a fresh start?

Let's face it, by PageStream 2.1, Part 5, I was going a bit far afield. So what do we have here? The computer life and times of Jimmy Hood as he struggles with a mechanical mind in an electronic age. A *rusty* mechanical mind even.

So ...

What I did last month

- Bought EdHak 2.20 to hack on PaintJet printer drivers.
- Bought Data Diet 1.0 to free up hard disk space.
- Kept reworking Bob Woolley's nonST Basic DeskJet color printing programs to get them running under GFA Basic 3.5.
- Learned that hard drives can have chip/socket corrosion problems, just like computers.
- Found out that the REAL expense with the DeskJet 500C is not the cost of the printer or even the cost of overhead transparency film but the cost of the color ink.
- Started paying attention to the differences between PageStream printing on Hewlett Packard printers and PostScript printers.

EdHak 2.20

I'd seen ads for EdHak but never thought much about it until Woolley and I got involved with the DeskJet C and were trying to get it to print color Pagestream files.

I wanted to look at the existing Hewlett Packard drivers that come with PageStream, so I needed a program that would show all 256 ASCII characters and let me mess with them.

The EdHak ads in the *Inform*er came to mind, so I hopped down to my friendly, local computer store and got a copy.

EdHak can be run as either a program or an accessory; or, as the instruction manual points out, a program and an accessory at the same time. Useful for comparing files.

Most programs nowadays are licensed for use of a single copy on a single computer by a single (or possibly divorced) user, so it was thrilling to put two copies of the program on my hard drive without feeling guilty about breaking my license agreement.

There is even a shareware version of EdHak on the program disk for those of us who want to relive the carefree pirating days of our youth without breaking any federal copyright laws.

EdHak uses the extended Atari character set for screen

display and editing of files, disk sectors, computer RAM or whatever.

The screen display can be in either Text mode or Hack mode. Text mode puts a new line on the screen after every carriage return/line feed combination and shows either a carriage return character or a blank space, at your discretion, at line end. Hack mode starts a new line every 64 characters, or however many you reset it for. It treats the carriage return, line feed and other characters as normal, editable display characters.

The Atari character set uses a blank space for both the Null character (ASCII 0) and the Space character (ASCII 32). Other than that, any ASCII character shows uniquely.

In Hack mode, the hexadecimal value of the character at the cursor is shown in the top window bar. Cursor line and column position are shown there in Text mode.

Editing functions include marking, cutting and pasting of blocks and finding and replacing characters. Characters can be entered from the keyboard, if you know the correct key combinations, or as either hex or decimal values.

EdHak has a 10K default text buffer size. Larger files can be loaded piece by piece and EdHak will put edited

pieces back together in a new file. For some jobs this can be tedious. For others it works fine. You can reset the default buffer size. The new size will take effect after rebooting or, after re-running when using as a program.

You can make it impossible to run the program by setting the buffer size larger than the memory size in your computer. How do you think I know that?

I haven't done any disk sector or RAM editing, but I'm sure I could mess up my hard drive if I wanted. Maybe some time when Chris and Vance aren't doing anything.

Data Diet

This program increases hard drive space by doing data compression and expansion of files which are saved or opened for use by programs on the ST/TT. To save time, when using a disk file, a copy is decompressed and saved in a temporary work directory where any subsequent reading and writing to that full size file occurs until the main program is exited, at which time the temporary file is compressed and saved back to the permanent directory.

The program will ignore drives, directories or file extenders that are specified in a user editable info file. These would include extenders such as PRG, ARC and SYS.

Files can be saved with either of two compression routines. One produces smaller files, the other compresses and expands its files faster.

I have found the compressed file sizes to be comparable to ARC'ed files. Since compression and expansion happen in the background, it is convenient to save backup and other floppy files in the Data Diet formats so that a separate decompression program doesn't need to be used whenever one of those files is wanted. However, it is important to remember not to compress files that are to be used on a computer that isn't using Data Diet. For instance, PageStream PostScript files for output on a service bureau Lino would more likely be ARC'ed since most service bureau owners aren't smart enough to buy Atari.

At the moment though I'm not compressing my active PageStream files. I hit a period a couple of weeks ago where my hard drive decided to get careless and I was using Data Diet on my PageStream data and font files. Eventually I had a bunch of messed up font files.

All of which may be no fault of Data Diet, because I've bombed several times while doing this *Journal* and also had my font list get screwed up a couple of times and Data Diet is being used here.

I recopied them and used Disk Sentry to straighten out my disk partition. But I forgot to turn off Data Diet while Disk Sentry was doing its thing. Before I turned the computer off, Disk Sentry had chomped its way through about half of my Degas picture files, which were on a separate disk partition, so I decided the belated prudent thing to do would

be to not use Data Diet with PageStream for awhile. Which is a shame, because it was compressing my font files to about 50% of their original size. However the frequent reading of the font files, including their decompression into the work directory was also adding enough time to be distracting.

It would be nice if Data Diet kept track of which files in the work directory were altered and which were only used for reading and then resaved only those which had been altered. My understanding is that *any* files uncompressed into the work directory are then rewritten when the current program is exited. This unnecessary rewriting only increases the chances of write errors and the time to close a program.

Quitting a program is an area where I have changed my normal working method because of Data Diet. Previously if I was finished with the computer for awhile I would likely just turn it off without bothering to first exit to the desktop. Now I exit first to give Data Diet a chance to clean out its work directory.

I *could* quit in my old, careless fashion and Data Diet would take care of moving files from the work directory to their permanent directories the next time I turned on the computer, but I'm just getting old and cautious I guess.

Data Diet takes over in most bomb situations I've encountered and moves files to their permanent directories before letting the computer return to the desktop. And as I

implied above, if the files didn't get saved back for some reason, they would normally be moved as soon as the computer was rebooted.

If several files are going to be copied or moved from one hard disk directory to another, or saved to backup floppies, the Data Diet accessory would normally be turned off. Otherwise time is wasted while the files are all uncompressed into the work directory, then recompressed and put in their new directory.

So far I have found Data Diet to be well thought out and useful. I think my problems with it and PageStream were more the result of a flakey hard drive than either program. However, when I start using it with PageStream again I will probably exclude the fonts from being compressed.

DeskJet 500C Color Printing

You no doubt recall that in last month's *Journal* I said that Bob Woolley and I were limited to color printing on the DeskJet 500C using Ami-Pro with a 286 clone.

Shortly after that Bob wrote a couple of Basic programs that could take color separated PageStream files, printed to disk using the DeskJet driver, and rework them so that they could be color printed on the DeskJet C. Of course, Bob being Bob, he didn't write them for the ST. He claims that he originally did them on the 8-bit and then converted them to MicroSoft GW Basic for the

clones. I have no reason to doubt that because my short exposure to using GW Basic with its brain dead editor made me long for good old Atari 8-bit Basic.

Anyway, to print files we still had to get them to the clone and if they were full page graphics they easily exceeded the space available on a floppy disk. I forget why we didn't just null modem the ST and clone together, but I think it was because Bob didn't have a serial connector on the clone at the time.

So I dug out my pristine, unused GFA Basic 3.5 and started trying to convert Bob's GW Basic conversion to GFA Basic.

I guess I could have pretty much just copied everything command for command, but GFA's lack of line numbers disoriented me, especially on GOTOs. And besides I noticed those neat sounding DO... UNTIL... LOOP thingies in GFA and wanted to try them.

I eventually got a version of one program working by using Bob's GW Basic line numbers for GFA Basic GOTO labels.

By about Version 14.27 I had been able to make one big program out of Bob's two small programs, but I kept leaving layers out of embedded loops, or structuring those DO... LOOPies wrong so that they appeared to be working correctly until a run of data had just the right sequence of characters to drop the program out of a loop when it shouldn't.

I'm now on something like Version 47.34b and it seems pretty solid.

I even found the FILESELECT command that allows GFA Basic to call up file selector menus, just like real ST programs are supposed to do.

This was the first time I had *really* tried to program anything for the ST (unless we can count LDW Power Macros) and it was kinda fun in its own frustrating way. But definitely not a way for me to make any money. As my wife will confirm.

I tried to use the GFA Basic Compiler on some of the stuff I wrote. Couldn't get it to work. Called GFA and they said I had a disk from a run of about a hundred copies where a bit had been dropped. They told me a fix to try, but I couldn't get it to work either. They also said they would send a corrected disk, which I haven't received yet.

When we first started messing with the DeskJet C, Bob and I were concerned with the cost of transparency sheets for overhead projections. At over a dollar per sheet, we figured this would be the major expense in using the DeskJet.

Now a little added experience with the printer has shown that the *REAL* expense is probably going to be in color ink cartridges.

Color prints that have large areas of solid colors can eat up ink.

I think it was in an article by Bill Zinn, in the ABACUS newsletter, where I read that it takes printing about ten solid pages when washing out ink residue while refilling black cartridges with colored inks.

This ten page capacity sounds about right for solid colors printed with the DeskJet C.

I needed to make thirty paper copies of a graphic having a dark blue border area and a light cyan center section. I printed the border as a style 5 halftone (i.e. about 50% density) and had to put in a new cartridge after 24 copies.

Had these been transparency prints instead of paper, I would have used solid blue, instead of the halftone, so I would have only gotten about 12 copies from one cartridge.

With the cartridges selling for \$30 each, including sales tax, that means each transparency would contain \$2.50 worth of ink. Add another \$1.00 for the transparency material itself and we're up to \$3.50.

If you want transparencies with bold, vivid screen colors you need to use two layers of ink, either by double printing on a single transparency sheet or by printing on two transparency sheets and overlaying them. So now the cost per graphic is up to \$6.00 or \$7.00.

The transparency sheets have a water soluble coating on them that is needed to accept and hold the inks. So to protect this surface you will probably want to put each finished transparency in a protective cover, like the Scotch Flip-Frame Transparency Protectors. Add another 75¢ and we're at \$6.75 to \$7.75 each.

Compare this to the cost of thermal wax transparencies at roughly \$2.50 each; or dye sublimation transparencies at

maybe \$5.00 each; including the Scotch Transparency Protectors, and the ink cost starts looking like the Achilles Heel of the DeskJet C printers.

However remember that these costs are based on graphic pages with large areas of solid colors.

The DeskJet's ink costs go down on pages with large white areas, whereas thermal wax and dye sublimation printers have a fixed per sheet cost.

For instance the cost estimates in the February '91 Macworld color printer evaluations for A-size paper prints were 25¢ for the HP PaintJet, 40¢ to 68¢ for thermal wax printers and \$3.85 to \$4.80 for dye sublimation printers.

The PaintJet's color printing costs should be *slightly* lower than the DeskJet's since it uses a separate cartridge for printing black areas, whereas the DeskJet makes black by overprinting all three ink colors.

There are several sources supplying color inks for refilling black DeskJet cartridges. Some of these inks *might* work in color DeskJet cartridges. Bob Woolley and I have determined that you can pry off the glued on green top and get access to the ink reservoirs in a color cartridge, but we haven't tried refilling them with anything yet.

Back to the Gold Standard

As I've said many times before, most of the problems that I've ever seen with the ST's have been caused by chips

getting insufficient electrical current to function properly. And generally this can be corrected by lifting and pushing the chips in and out of their sockets a few times to rub off the oxidation on the pin and socket surfaces, thereby improving conductivity.

Gold coating would cure the problem, but who does that anymore?

Now I've found that you can run into the same problem with your hard drive.

My drive started insisting it be turned on and warmed up for a few minutes before it would pay attention to the computer. Sorta like waking up slow in the morning and not functioning before your first cup of coffee.

As I mentioned in the Data Diet review, this was happening about the time I first started using Data Diet and eventually I was able to mess things up. At that time I was also trying to sort through the PaintJet driver, so I kept ignoring the hard drive problem because of my obsession with the PageStream printer drivers.

Anyway, I finally opened up my hard drive, lifted and pushed on the chips, wiggled, unconnected and reconnected connectors and did other techie things like that and it's been working fine since.

PageStream Printing: Differences Between PostScript and Hewlett Packard

Aw, maybe next month guys...

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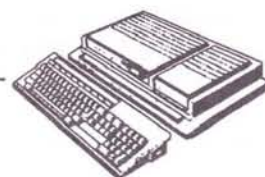
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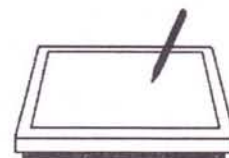
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SOFTW 8-BIT DISKS

by Bob Scholier SLCC 8-bit Software Chairman

SLCC DISK- December 1991

This month's disk features PICTURE, UTILITY and DEMO programs. It also has 3 Games, and one program which I'm at a loss to classify- I guess I'd call it a 'seasonal' SIMulation (with good humor).

CONTENTS

Games

- BEAM.BAS- a maze game & DOC
- BIRDEGGS.BAS- an action game.
- CRYPTOGR.AM- puzzles. May be OK for younger players?

UTILities

- ARSMaker.BAS- to make ARS files.
- MENU.BAS- an old friend returns. Another way to make an ARS, plus some other special features, as below:-
- JOYTEST.BAS- test your Joystick, your reflexes, and your paddles.
- QDIR.BAS- gets disk directories from BASIC without going to DOS or a MENU- 8 separate programs. See below & DOC.

DEMO

- MPEREZ.PGM is a clever 'line wiper' by Mark Perez (with DOC) which was published in ANTIC. We remember Mark!

SIMulation(?)

- SANTABBS is certainly seasonal- you'll have to decide what other category it fits!

PICTures

- The entire back of the disk is devoted to a special loader and five 'AMIGA' PICS from Germany (with Intro).

PROGRAM COMMENTS

BEAM.BAS (Beam Me Up!) by Steven Ginzburg is from ANTIC, 10,11/1989 (Vol. 8; #6). It's a maze challenge with seven levels. You can add two more levels and/or revise the ones on disk. You MUST keep moving! For one player, with J/S. See BEAM.DOC.

BIRDEGGS.BAS by Wade Marshall is from ANTIC (9/87). It's for one player with Joystick. It takes a little time to initialize. You have a jetpack

which works when you move the stick in any direction;- gravity pulls you back down. You must get 3 eggs from the top of the tree and return to the pad at the bottom; to advance to the next level (where things get tougher). If you collide with a 'Gloot' bird, you lose one of your five lives. It has ten levels. This is a simple, but challenging game for young and old.

CRYPTOGR.AM is an excellent, if fairly simple program for one or two players. It has 2 difficulty levels and fifty randomly selected phrases, which you can edit or add to for the one-player mode. In two player mode; each one enters phrases for the other to decipher. It is self explanatory (no DOC). I have no idea who wrote it. It looks like an excellent game for younger players.

ARSMaker.BAS is a UTILITY which some of our members have requested. The file ARSMaker.DOC explains its purpose and use. It does just what the name suggests. Another way to produce an AUTORUN.SYS file is provided by:-

MENU.BAS which has been used on many of our older disks. List the code and look at line 10! It's an excellent program and it has features not included in FULMENU. Besides the ARS generator (mentioned above) it runs BINary or BASic (& Text) files; sorts the Directory; enables you to title the disk; deletes only the first of 2 files with the same name; toggles the cursor; flips characters; and has a very good HELP screen. The text reading action can be confusing, so I've included an AUTODOC.RDR and a READER on the disk.

JOYTEST.BAS by Kevin Gevatovsky, is from ANTIC (Sept. 1989). It tests your Joystick and reflexes; and your paddles. It's self explanatory.

QDIR.DOC (my name) explains the eight short directory access programs which follow it, and their filenames.

MPEREZ.PGM is a short, elegant DEMO from the Oct./Nov./1989 ANTIC. See MPEREZ.DOC for more detail.

SANTABBS.BAS by A. Baggetta is dated 12/1/86. It simulates a call to Santa's BBS; with provision to leave your message (in MYLIST.FIL). No DOC is necessary.

Side B of this disk, from MAPDA (Munich Atari PD Assoc'n.) is a DEMO of Escal Paint. It has an Intro. (translated from German), a loader, and five AMIGA PICS. To change the PICTures, hit any console key. To rerun the program, press RESET.

P.S.- The updated (1050 density) SLCC Library Disk will be ready soon. A Single Density addendum could also be issued.

Pounding on the 8-Bits

Buy your own / Share what you know / 8 bits are plenty

January, 1992

by Bob Woolley

Everyone have a nice Holiday? Hope so. Hey, the Club starts a new year, is this number ten? We are doing pretty good for a bunch of gamers, aren't we? Got to credit the people pitching in for that... Jim Hood, Glenn Fowler, Jim Whatshisname, Keith Sammons, Bob Scholar, Jim Ahrens, Joe Castro, Einar Andrade, DeWayne Stuart, Ralf Herman, and Ray Thomas. And all you folks that wrote stuff for the Journal. And helped on the Christmas party. And donated to our raffle (led by Bob Brodie and the Atari crew). And on and on.... And, their Significant Others (can't forget them!). The Club is just what we put in to it, which was quite a bit last year. Let's keep it up!

So, how do we start off the New Year? How about fixing my DeskJet Plus? Yeah - it died. I have seen another Plus wipe out it's mechanism. I thought at the time that it was from long, hard hours in an office. Now, I am not so sure. The other printer had worn out the gear train that feeds and ejects the page and runs the cartridge cleaning mechanism. The whole print unit just lifts out - plug in the new one. The new version has a few things deleted in the feed and eject and clean section, by the way.

Looking at my printer, which has less than 10 reams of paper thru it, we see the old style mechanism with all wheels and gears and things. Guess what? My little wheelie doobies don't anymore. Just like the first one! Hmmmmmmm..... Two printers don't make a large enough sample to show a problem exists. My DJ Plus warranty? One year. My DJ 500C warranty? Three years. Recommendation: don't pay very much for a used DeskJet Plus unless it has the new mechanicals. By the way, my DJ Plus Epson cartridge does NOT work in the 500C. Bummer. Right at Journal weekend, too.

OK. Now for some hacking.

Ever seen a Telelink II cartridge? The one for the 835 and 1030? These guys use the T: handler instead of the R: handler in the 850. With this guy you can get online with just a computer and the modem - nothing else. No 850, no disk drive! no drive? Where do you store your

phone numbers and logons and stuff?

In the cartridge.

The II cartridge has an EEPROM built into it! No battery, stored forever, change it whenever you want! The ROM sits in the \$A000 - \$BFFF addresses and the EEPROM sits between \$8000 and \$9FFF. The EEPROM is marked as an X2212D - never heard of it, myself. No reason why we couldn't pop the ROM out of there and stick in a Basic or something. Don't know how much storage there is or how to get to it, but we'll find out, won't we? Could be fun!

Ultimate telecommunicating cartridge is the 1400 unit. Has not only the T: handler, but has built-in speech! Plug it in to your 1450 and it "tawks" to you! Plug it into your 1450XLD and it just growls - which is more than I ever got out of the XLD any other way. An 8-bitter from New York, Curt Vendel, sent me one of these guys so I could maybe pry a few speech secrets out of it. So far, I can see where they open the V:SF device and then ship data to it. The data format is:

send	says
- PRI3TERPA1AWNN	"printer on"
- PRI3NTERPA1AWFF	"printer off"
- PRI3NTERPA1NAH1TREHDE1PA1PA1	"printer not ready"
- KEBO2RDPA1UH1NNLAW1KT	"keyboard unlocked"
- KEBO2RDPA1LAW1KT	"keyboard locked"
- VOYSPA1AWFF	"voice off"
- VOYSPA1AWNN	"voice on"
- NO1RMLLSKREN	"normal screen"
- WAH2EH3YDSKREN	"wide screen"
- NAROWSKREN	"narrow screen"
- FORSSPA0UH1PERKAS	"force uppercase"
- LOWRKASLEH1TERS	"lowercase letters"
- WERDRAE1PPA1AWFF	"wordwrap off"
- WERDRAE1PPA1AWNN	"wordwrap on"
- PA1PA1NOPA1KUH3NEH1KSHUH1N	"no connection"
- PA1PA1AWNNLAH2EH3YNN	"online"

Looks pretty simple, doesn't it? I'll dig a little deeper next month. Meanwhile, you can OPEN #1,8,0,"V:SF" and Print #1; ".....". Sounds great!

Jolly Jim's Jumbled Juvenilia

President Bob Woolley started the meeting very promptly at 8:05 PM. (For Bob 5 minutes late is very prompt.) Bob welcomed all to our annual party and meeting and introduced new members.

Bob thanked all members who had worked for the club during the past year, without whose help the club would be unable to function. (Though I hate to admit it, a lot of those thanks should go to Hood and Woolle; without those two we would be in deep dodo. With them we will probably go broke but then you can't have everything.)

The next order of monkey business was to auction off the club's second kiosk (the 250 pound one). After the great success of last month's auction this one looked to be pretty dull but surprisingly enough bidders came out of the woodwork and ran the bid all the way up to 7500. (cents that is)

Raffle prizes included a new LYNX game machine (from SLCC), a rare, almost valuable, ATARI 400 membrane keyboard, more of those notorious keyboard covers, miscellaneous software and last but not least a complete CALAMUS desktop publishing program brought to the club by Bob Brodie and donated by ISD Marketing in Canada. (Thanks ISD)

The President noted that the A.I.M. magazine problems had been finally squared away and all 19 are on the way.

Following a short question and answer period our resident D.O.M. Bob Scholar discussed the 8 Bit floppy and reminded all that a full report was in the *Journal*. Bob said that the size of the file for the 8 Bit software library has finally

outgrown a single density disk and will have to be moved to an extended format disk.

The final speaker of the night and the year was none other than big (make that very big) Bob Brodie, Atari's chief assistant doer of all things, head rumor monger and general nice guy. Bob discussed at length the recent Chicago show which was put on by local user groups with assistance from Atari. There was a large 8 Bit section where Atari had many of the older 8 Bit items that they were closing out.

One of the new things that was tried at the Chicago show was a special game room that charged a \$2 admission fee. There was also a similar CALAMUS and PAGE-STREAM setup featuring three hour tutorials, put on by experts, that had a fee of \$15 (used for course materials, etc.). Both the programs were very well attended and considered a success. ATARI will look into helping put on a couple more shows using this same type format to try and get away from the flea market image.

Somewhere during the evening we all stopped and devoured cake and ice cream which was hosted by our President's supervisor, Sharon Woolley.

As part of our party meeting we had our biggest and best raffle what with the LYNX and CALAMUS both as part of the prizes. This could have been the best ever except the same crooks were in charge and I didn't win anything again. Oh well maybe next year.

Wishing all of you (especially Steve and Ralf) Happy Holidays I remain *Jim Moran - Secretary*

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A New Year, An Old Story

Once again we have no special plans for our General Meeting.

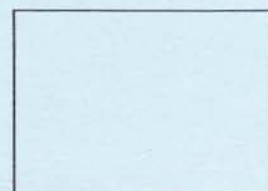
We will raffle an Amdek Color 1+ color monitor, which may be used as an 8-Bit monitor, or hooked to a VCR, or anything else the high bidder decides to do with it.

President Woolley is leaving town, so what does he care?

Program Chairman Sammons lost his life savings on the Raiders so he doesn't care either.

It sounds exciting!

**San
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**General Meeting
January 7, 1992**

at the

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